

The contemporary Australian street art scene began in the mid 1990s, but its origins can be traced to the Australian graffiti subculture that emerged in the early 1980s. Whereas graffiti is based on the 'tag' name and communicates to other members of the graffiti subculture, street art is broader in its appeal and in its desire to communicate with the general public. Street art includes stencils, painted posters, paste-ups, stickers and zines. The National Gallery of Australia recognises these forms of street art as contemporary printmaking and drawing. nga.gov.au/spaceinvaders

Art galleries ... have played a role in changing perceptions about street art: acquiring posters and recent examples of street art for their collections has helped legitimise practices that have often been outlawed. In the case of the National Gallery of Australia, zines and stencilled images on paper take their place alongside earlier posters and self-published books.

Roger Butler, Senior Curator of Australian Prints and Drawings at the National Gallery of Australia



This exhibition is supported by the Contemporary Touring Initiative through Visions of Australia, an Australian Government program, and the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian Government and state and territory governments.

CULTURAL PARTNERS



SPECIAL MEDIA PARTNER



© National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2011

Adapted by NGA Education from the book *Space invaders*, and produced by NGA Publishing in conjunction with the exhibition *Space invaders: australian . street . stencils . posters . paste-ups . zines . stickers.*

The National Gallery of Australia is an Australian Government Agency

Jumbo and Zap X-ray man-machine pointing a ray-gun at the amphibians 2010 (detail), hand-painted poster, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, acquired with the support of Calypso Mary Efkarpidis, 2010. © Jumbo and Zap

SPACE INVADERS

NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA



POLITICAL STENCILS

Civil

not titled (*burn normality*) 2003

stencil, 40 x 33 cm (image), 59.4 x 42 cm (sheet)

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Gordon Darling Australia Pacific

Print Fund, 2007

Politically inspired stencils are often motivated by the idea that to work on the street is the most effective and direct method of communication. Tom Civil is an artist and activist. He created his first stencil in 1998 as a protest against uranium mining at Jabiluka in the Northern Territory. Civil believes that the street is 'an important and necessary part of society' and that, as public space, it should be reclaimed by artists, activists and individuals.¹ He makes stencils to express his opposition to environmental destruction and to the 'mental pollution' of corporate advertising and government propaganda. Civil uses printed material such as old books to recycle and re-contextualise typography and imagery. Letters and images are selected, cut up, photocopied and combined in collage-based designs.

Civil is a founding member of Breakdown Press, an independent, grassroots publishing company that produces posters, zines, stickers and books. Breakdown Press has brought together many artists and activists since it was founded in 2004, encouraging a creative political voice in the community.



AUSTRALIAN STREET | STENCILS | POSTERS | PASTE-UPS | ZINES | STICKERS

DISCUSSION

What is Civil asking us to do?

By stencilling this image in public spaces, what is the artist trying to communicate?

ACTIVITY

Think of a topic being discussed in the public arena. Make a stencil that expresses your attitude to an event or experience.

Note

1. Jake Smallman and Carl Nyman, 'Profile, Civilian', *Stencil graffiti capital, Melbourne*, Mark Batty Publisher, New York, 2005, p15.



burn normality

POSTERS

Jumbo and Zap

X-ray man-machine pointing a ray-gun at the amphibians 2010

hand-painted poster, 247 x 586 cm

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, acquired with the support of Calypso Mary Efkarpidis, 2010. © Jumbo and Zap

Jumbo and Zap are Sydney-based street artists. Years of experimentation have resulted in the unmistakable Jumbo and Zap style: huge billboard-size works that burst with colour and pattern.

Zap favours psychedelic monsters and subhumans that recall the underground comic-book scene and counterculture of the 1960s. Jumbo uses a chaotic mix of detail and pattern. The street art that these two artists produce together results in a visual mash-up style with influences from art movements such as Dada and Pop Art.

Jumbo says of their work:

We use a lot of found images and assemble them in a spontaneous way. I'll see a body of a villain that I like and put it in with a head of another character. Zap is much the same, except he uses different references ... that doesn't matter though ... we are working towards a similar goal: to use images in a cut-up, Dada-like style, where you are free to merge and combine separate forms.¹



DISCUSSION

Compare the work of Jumbo and Zap with other artists and musicians. Who else uses sampling and appropriation in a mash-up style?

ACTIVITY

Create a collaborative image using found images that have distinct styles.

Note

1. Jumbo, interview with Jaklyn Babington, 22 January 2010.



STICKERS

A group of stencilled stickers by Byrd, in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, and acquired with the support of Calypso Mary Efkarpidis, 2010. © byrd

In the tradition of the mass-produced print, the creation of multiples has gained popularity. Stickers, in particular, are a perfect, lo-fi, viral means of saturating a city with images and messages. The creative process takes place away from the street, in a studio or home, where the artist has the freedom to refine ideas over time. The act of placing the work of art, however, is spontaneous and adrenalin-fuelled.

The prospect for a much wider distribution of images is central to the popularity of stickers as a street art form. Stickers can travel great distances with great efficiency, can be seen in more places and, most importantly, can be placed by any enthusiast wanting to participate in the creative act of modifying public space. Stickers provide street artists with a quick, easy and discreet way of getting up, free from the usual in-situ constraints associated with one-off, site-specific pieces.

What I like about stickers is that they are small enough not to be noticed by the Council but they do get noticed by the right audience. I love the engagement on the street, behind the road signs, where everyone places their stickers. If people really love them, it is a little trophy that they can also take away with them.¹



DISCUSSION

Identify places you have seen street stickers and discuss the contrast in the placement of these with other forms of street art and graffiti.

ACTIVITY

Use contact, scissors and indelible markers to create your own stickers.

Note

1. Mini Graff, interview with Jaklyn Babington, May 2010.



mett

Want to be the 2026

IMGONNAI
FUCKHER
RIGHTOUT
OFMYHEAD



PASTE-UPS

Ghostpatrol

Hexen 2010

drawn paste-up, variable dimensions

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, acquired with the support of Calypso

Mary Efkarpidis, 2010. © Ghostpatrol

Many street artists have begun to make hand-drawn and painted one-off posters and cut-paper works that can be pasted up in the street quickly to minimise the risk of being caught. Ghostpatrol and Miso are representatives of this new generation of street artists.

Ghostpatrol's paste-ups, finely crafted with brush and ink on thin brown paper, are the complete opposite to the showy and brash graffiti and street art of the past. *Rebel yell* 2010 and *Hexen* 2010 are deliberately whimsical, subtle works on paper that are set in juxtaposition with their harsh urban environment. Acting out dreamlike narratives, Ghostpatrol's fine-limbed figures seem to acquire a sense of bravery in the face of something much bigger and more menacing: the concrete city.

Miso makes papercuts that interrupt the everyday journey through the city. Her *Miso 1* 2001 was made to surround a doorway. Miso draws inspiration from people she sees on the street and from influences as diverse as Russian Constructivism, folk songs, Greek mythology, the Vienna Secession and Art Nouveau.

SPACE INVADERS

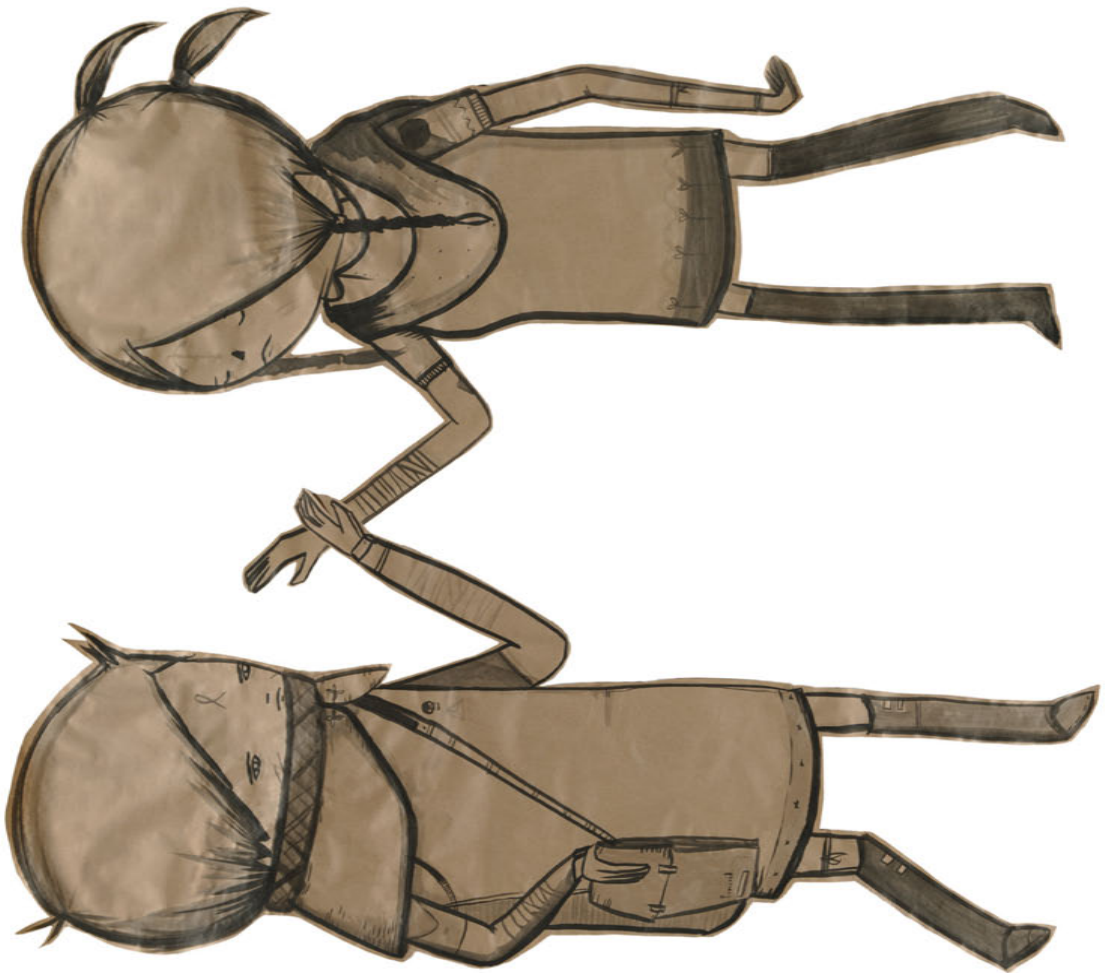
AUSTRALIAN STREET | STENCILS | POSTERS | PASTE-UPS | ZINES | STICKERS

DISCUSSION

Identify a moment when you have felt alienated from your environment and consider the cause of this sensation.

ACTIVITY

Create a large paper cut-out drawing to fit an architectural element, such as a doorway or window, in your environment.



ADBUSTING

Marcsta*

7 Evil men 2001

stencil, 67.3 x 49 cm (image), 72 x 54.2 cm (sheet)

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Gordon Darling Australia Pacific Print Fund, 2007. © Marc de Jong

Marcsta has been working for two decades as a street artist with a particular interest in adbusting. His work appears as stencils, stickers and posters that subvert recognised signs and symbols to raise questions about their legitimacy.

Marcsta participates in the visual culture of billboards, advertising posters and signs by parodying familiar logos and brands such as KFC, 7-Eleven, American Express, Sports Girl, Coca-Cola, Apple, Nestle and Cold Power. The artist reworks these big-name brands in humorous and powerful ways to make us question the influence that multi-national companies and advertising have on our lives. Marcsta says that he wants us to look beyond the 'consumer drip feed'.¹



DISCUSSION

Select a number of works by artists such as Marcsta and Mini Graff or Dlux! and Civil and compare the ways these artists are engaging with adbusting or with political and environmental issues.

ACTIVITY

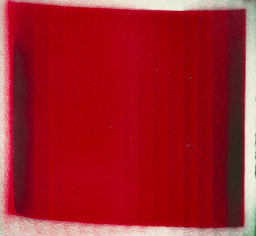
Find an advertisement in a newspaper or a magazine. Use cut-out letters and a photocopier to alter the message.

Notes

1. Marcsta, interview with Jaklyn Babington, 23 January 2010.



EVIL MEN



OPEN

24

HOURS

ZINES

A group of Australian zines from the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Zines are one of the most vibrant forms of underground creative expression, with a rapidly expanding network of Australian zine makers and zine collecting enthusiasts. While many street artists and their street-based expression have been restricted by the authorities, the inconspicuous zine continues to defy categorisation, censorship and regulation.

By their very nature, zines revolt against the aesthetic of the mass-produced, big-budget, commercially controlled and globally marketed publication, to embrace an honest aesthetic of the cut-and-paste technique, self-published, self-promoted and limited edition. Through the combination of pen, paper and most commonly, a photocopier, even the most simply created zine becomes a unique mix of the intimate and the multiple, the handmade and the mechanical and the ephemeral and the collectable.

Underground, elusive, ephemeral. Zines are humble and proud at the same time; they are loud and quiet, powerful, empowering and powerless, legendary and forgotten, tangible but invisible, plentiful but hidden, spontaneous, subversive, innocent and naive. This is the enigmatic world of Australia's thriving zine culture, an art form that bypasses galleries, museums, publishing houses, libraries and, most of the time, mainstream consciousness.¹



DISCUSSION

Identify groups of like-minded artists, writers, poets and musicians throughout the history of art. Discuss who they are, or were, and the value of such groups or collectives.

ACTIVITY

Create a zine based on a theme explored by an artist you admire.

Notes

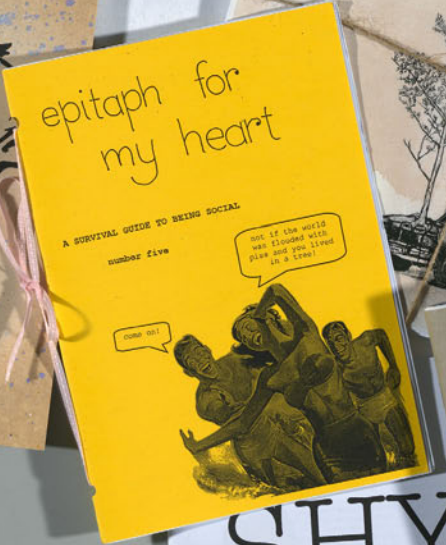
1. Eloise Peace, 'Bypassing the system: zine culture in Australia', in *Space invaders: australian . street . stencils . posters . paste-ups . zines . stickers*, exhibition catalogue, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2010, p57.

BOOK 8
SET LIST



ON SALE
A TOURIST'S
HANDBOOK/
SURVIVAL
GUIDE TO MY
HOME TOWN

ON WEDNESDAY
AN ANTHOLOGY
OF ONE YEAR
ONE LIFE



UNREASONABLE VENDORIA
(the deaf elot)

SHY
like a punched pie

